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RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 5420  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3080  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6872  
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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 03/20/09

INDEX:

- (1) Fuel tank lorries moving around missile site; N. Korea in final phase of readiness to launch missile (Sankei)
- (2) Ozawa renews his criticism of prosecutors (Sankei)
- (3) Moves of potential successors to Ozawa gradually emerging: Some call on Ozawa to honorably step down (Yomiuri)
- (4) DPJ hits back at ruling camp; ruling coalition has breathing room (Sankei)
- (5) U.S. military's deluxe housing to be paid for with Japan's tax money (Akahata)
- (6) TOP HEADLINES
- (7) EDITORIALS
- (8) Prime Minister's schedule, March 19 (Nikkei)
- (9) Political Cartoon (Sankei)

ARTICLES:

- (1) Fuel tank lorries moving around missile site; N. Korea in final phase of readiness to launch missile

SANKEI (Top play) (Full)  
March 20, 2009

North Korea has been preparing to launch an advanced type of the

Taepodong-2, a long-range ballistic missile, as a "satellite." Tank lorries carrying fuel needed to launch a missile began moving earlier this month to the east side of a launch pad at Musudanri in that country's northeastern North Hamkyong Province, the Sankei Shimbun learned yesterday from sources familiar with Japan-U.S. diplomatic relations. When North Korea launched missiles in 1998 and 2006 as well, tank lorries began to move around about 20 days before missile launches. The recent busy moves of those fuel-carrying vehicles prove that North Korea is now in the final phase of its readiness to launch a "satellite" between April 4 and 8 as it has announced.

According to the sources, U.S. reconnaissance satellites, which are watching developments in North Korea, have closely captured tank lorries carrying rocket engine propellant.

The new Taepodong-2 missile with a longer range was carried out of a factory near Pyongyang, North Korea, around Feb. 8, and it was loaded into a freight train and was moved to Musudanri. At that time, it was also confirmed that a nearby road was under construction for expansion.

Around mid-February, a missile tracking and controlling radar facility was located in an area north of the launch pad and a fueling facility was also set up on the east side of it. In late February, several fueling-carrying tank lorries were confirmed as they were moving around the launch pad. The fuel was carried to the fueling facility. "They have now only to pipe fuel into the missile from the fueling facility before launching it," a source said.

TOKYO 00000628 002 OF 008

It also seems that the launch pad was stretched and the missile's fuel tank was enlarged for a longer range at the same time. Furthermore, tank lorries began earlier this month to show busy moves near Musudanri, according to the sources.

The improved model of the Taepodong-2 has a range of 8,500 kilometers. It is a three-stage missile, with the first stage using liquid fuel and the second and third stages using solid fuel. The tank lorries are considered to be playing the role of bring liquid fuel to the injection facility for the first booster stage.

North Korea launched its first Taepodong missile in August 1998. It landed in the Pacific off the Sanriku region after having passed over Japan. In July 2006, the DPRK launched a total of seven missiles, including one long-range ballistic missile, Taepodong-2 (range of approximately 6,000 kilometers), which landed in the Japan Sea off the coast of Russia.

From the timing of the last two launches, it has been speculated that 20 days prior to the launching, there will be a activities leading to the launch, such an increase in lorries carrying fuel, according to a government-connected source. The government based on what it has observed and analyzed, the government will focus on relating that to the current activity. A Japan-U.S. diplomatic source pointed out: "It tells us that launch preparations have reached the final stage."

(2) Ozawa renews his criticism of prosecutors

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged slightly)  
March 20, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa has been quiet lately about the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office special investigation team that had arrested his first state-paid secretary on suspicion of violating the Political Funds Control Law. Ozawa renewed his criticism of the prosecutors yesterday, expressing his dissatisfaction with their investigative policy direction, while indicating that he would remain in his post, saying, "I will not stop fighting." Meanwhile, the DPJ political reform promotion task force chaired by Katsuya Okada met yesterday and began discussing ways to tighten regulations on donations, including a total ban on corporate and organizational donations.

Ozawa met with Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama at a Japanese restaurant in Tokyo last night. Ozawa told Hatoyama: "The way the prosecutors are handling the matter is utterly terrible. I don't care what happens to me; I will not stop fighting. Irrespective of their decision (on March 24), I will fight tooth and nail." Ozawa thus indicated that even if the aide is indicted by prosecutors, he would assert his secretary's innocence in court. He also indicated that if the DPJ takes the helm of government through the next House of Representatives election, the new administration would review the modalities of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office, saying: "Once we take power, we will stamp out (the abuse of) prosecution power."

In a press conference after the secretary's arrest, Ozawa criticized the Tokyo prosecutors' office, saying: "The donations were dealt with appropriately under the law," and, "It is an unfair use of state power." Ozawa subsequently softened his stance following his aide's advice to abstain from criticizing the prosecutors.

TOKYO 00000628 003 OF 008

Ozawa's remarks came from his strong distrust in the Tokyo prosecutors' office that had arrested his secretary (for falsely listing donations) in violation of the Political Funds Control Law. A senior DPJ lawmaker took this view: "The secretary's detention will end soon. Even if he is indicted, Mr. Ozawa is confident that he can win the trial."

In yesterday's political reform meeting, Okada said: "Public trust in politics must be restored. It is important to come up with effective reform measures." Okada also underlined the need to discuss a wide range of political donations, including fund-raising parties.

In his meeting with Hatoyama, Ozawa, too, said: "There is no other option but to ban corporate and organizational donations altogether. The public will not support a half-baked step."

In the political reform meeting, some also speculated if the party could get by only on subsidies from the government and individual donations.

After the meeting, Okada told the press corps that DPJ executives would meet again next week to discuss the matter, saying: "We have yet to come up with any clear direction. We are going to discuss everything from fundamental factors."

Ruling parties slam Ozawa's proposal as deceitful

Ozawa's suggestion to totally ban corporate and organizational donations drew fire from the government and the ruling parties yesterday. Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Notutaka Machimura of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) who heads his own faction warned his faction members not to be taken in by Ozawa's statement, describing it deceitful. Former LDP Secretary General Bunmei Ibuki said: "A pitcher who threw a wild forkball has no right to prohibit other pitchers from throwing forkballs."

Administrative Reform Minister Akira Amari had this to say about a review of the Political Funds Control Law: "Debate must be conducted in a way that does not end up inconveniencing the honest people because of the dishonest people."

(3) Moves of potential successors to Ozawa gradually emerging: Some call on Ozawa to honorably step down

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
March 20, 2009

A move is beginning to emerge in the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) that is eyeing President Ozawa's next course of action. Whether Ozawa's state-funded first secretary, who was arrested on the charge of violating the Political Funds Control Law, will be indicted or not will be decided by March 24th. Ozawa will likely decide next week if he will quit his post or stay on.

Ozawa on March 19 met with Upper House Diet Steering Committee Chairman Takeo Nishioka at his private office. Nishioka told Ozawa that there is no need for him to step down. Ozawa reportedly responded with a smile but remained vague about his future course of action.

TOKYO 00000628 004 OF 008

Some are calling on Ozawa to stay on, viewing that the public would agree to some extent with his criticism of the public prosecutors that it was strange for them to handle donations received by the DPJ side alone as a criminal case. However, the reality is that DPJ members are increasingly looking harshly at Ozawa, with the next Lower House election close at hand. Even some junior lawmakers who support Ozawa have begun expressing hopes that he would honorably resign from his office, that is to say, voluntarily step down so that he could keep his influence over the party.

Under such circumstances, persons close to Ozawa, such as Vice President Katsuya Okada and Deputy President Kan, who are deemed as likely candidates to succeed him, are beginning to show signs of making their move.

Okada at an executive meeting of the DPJ Political Reform Promotion Headquarters, which he himself chairs, indicated a strong desire to tighten restrictions on political funds, noting: "Politics-and-money scandals are an age-old problem. Pursuing discussion properly by returning to the starting point will lead to the DPJ regaining the people's trust in politics." Lawmakers who support Okada hope that if he coordinates the views of party members to support a total ban on corporate donations, it would further enhance the DPJ's clean image and work to his advantage in making a bid for Ozawa's post. Okada on the evening of the 18th held a meeting with Vice President Yoshiaki Takagi, who was elected as Lower House member in the same year as Okada.

Regarding Ozawa's future course of action, Kan during a press conference on the 19th said, "Mr. Ozawa will presumably make a decision on his own. I trust him and wait for his decision." Kan on the same evening discussed future approaches with junior lawmakers who support him. An aide close to Kan said, "We kept down the number of participants in the meeting so as not to provoke other party members."

Lawmakers close to Secretary General Hatoyama also held a meeting the same day, and all agreed to watch how things will develop.

(4) DPJ hits back at ruling camp; ruling coalition has breathing room

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
March 20, 2009

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which has been losing ground to the ruling parties due to the arrest of its leader Ichiro Ozawa's secretary, tried to strike back at the ruling coalition in a House of Councillors Budget Committee session yesterday. DPJ members questioned whether command authority had been exercised by Prime Minister Aso in connection with the arrest of the aide. They also pursued the New Komeito's relations with the religious sect Soka Gakkai, which is the party's main support body. However, the DPJ's strategy of trying to put the government and ruling parties in the lurch ended in failure.

DPJ lawmaker Shokichi Kina posed a question to Aso in the Upper House committee session: "You are a Christian, aren't you? Can you swear to God that you did not use your command authority?" He asked whether the case had been "fairly prosecuted." He also pursued Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Iwao Uruma's comment that the donation scandal would not spread to the Liberal Democratic Party

TOKYO 00000628 005 OF 008

(LDP). He unleashed his anger, saying:

"I wonder why prosecutors arrested the secretary of the opposition party leader, who will likely to become prime minister through a change in government. More than 20 lawmakers, including Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and former Finance Minister Koji Omi, were involved in the Nishimatsu scandal. I think the ruling coalition, which has administrative authority, should have been prosecuted first."

However, Prime Minister Taro Aso replied: "I didn't meet the public prosecutor general. I did not exercise command authority at all." Justice Minister Eisuke Mori stressed: "It is impossible for prosecutors to investigate with political intent."

However, Aso appeared to have apologized once when he was criticized that his remarks in an Upper House Budget Committee session on March 16 had violated the principle of presumed innocence. Aso then told the committee session: "The secretary was arrested because it was clear he had violated the law." He now avoided the question, saying: "I understand that prosecutors arrested him based on judging from their investigation that he had come under suspicion. Prosecutors do not decide based on the result of an individual case."

Yasuo Ichikawa, who took the floor as a questioner ahead of Kina, spend half of his time to pursue the New Komeito's relations with Soka Gakkai.

Ichikawa criticized: "The New Komeito and the religious sect Soka Gakkai, the party's main backer, have distorted Japan's politics." He then posed such questions as: "If a New Komeito lawmaker is elected, is it true that an Upper House member will pay six million yen and a Lower House member three million yen to the party?" "Has the New Komeito collected money for the Soka Gakkai's anniversary?"

The DPJ has brought up the relationship between the New Komeito and the religious organization in Upper House Budget Committee sessions and other occasions. The purpose is to cause discord in the ruling camp by demanding that senior Soka Gakkai officials be summoned to testify before the Diet.

On March 19, as well, Ichikawa called for summoning former New Komeito Chairman Junya Yano and other officials, as there were differences in Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito's Diet replies and remarks by Yano and others. However, the contents of the question did not shock the New Komeito. The party members said that they were disappointed and that they had answered such questions already.

(5) U.S. military's deluxe housing to be paid for with Japan's tax money

AKAHATA (Top play) (Full)  
March 20, 2009

In connection with the planned relocation of U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Guam, it was revealed in a meeting yesterday of the House of Councillors Budget Committee that deluxe housing is highly likely to be built on Guam for U.S. military personnel and their families using Japanese taxpayers' money. One unit, for example, has a total floor space of 234 square meters with four bedrooms and two bathrooms. Satoshi Inoue, a House of Councillors member of the Japanese Communist Party, pursued this issue before the committee.

TOKYO 00000628 006 OF 008

According to the Guam relocation plan, the Japanese government is to provide outlays of 2.55 billion dollars to construct 3,520 housing units on Guam for U.S. military personnel and families, or approximately 75 million yen per housing unit.

"A foreign country spends public money on the construction of a U.S. military base in U.S. territory. I've never heard of anything like this in the world. Moreover, in Japan, there are now many people losing their jobs and homes. The taxpayers' money must not be used in this way." With this, Inoue criticized dipping into the state coffers for such official expenditures.

The reference material shown by Inoue before the committee is a U.S.

Defense Department documentation titled the "Unified Facilities Criteria" (UFC), which details specifications to be followed when the U.S. military builds facilities. In the case of family housing, space is determined according to ranks and other factors. Even a private is provided with a total floor space of at least 125 square meters, and a colonel with a total floor space of 234 square meters including four bedrooms.

The UFC also stipulates that the main bedroom should have enough space for a kingsized bed and that housing with three or four bedrooms will be provided with a family room in addition to a living room.

The UFC also specifies housing-related facilities, such as "a tennis court per 150 housing units, a basketball court per 100 housing units, and an open athletic field of about 400 square meters for 100 to 200 housing units." Inoue asked if Japan will have to bear even such costs. In reply, Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada did not deny the burden. He stated: "Japan and the United States are still holding consultations. It has yet to be decided."

Inoue stated: "The agreement (between Japan and the U.S.) specifies the total amount of costs for Guam relocation and Japan's share of the costs. The government has asked the Diet to approve it. However, the government has not shown any grounds for the estimated costs. This is not convincing to the people." With this, Inoue strongly requested the government provide the committee with the grounds for Japan's fiscal burden of approximately 650 billion yen for the Guam relocation plan.

#### (6) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi, Tokyo Shimbun:  
Six die in fire at nursing home in Shibukawa

Mainichi:  
Government, ruling parties eye raising limit on low-interest loans extended by Development Bank of Japan

Yomiuri:  
Ruling coalition task force calls for 300 billion yen for measures to create employment in local areas

Nikkei:  
Government to facilitate corporate tax deductions for stock write-downs

Sankei:

TOKYO 00000628 007 OF 008

Japan-U.S. diplomatic sources: Fuel tanks active, North Korea making final preparations for missile launch

Akahata:  
JCP's Inoue pursues possible plan to build luxurious U.S. military housing on Guam with Japan's tax money

#### (7) EDITORIALS

Asahi:  
(1) Safety net for employment: Create a structure that is easy to use  
(2) Spring wage offensive: Politics, labor and management should make efforts for employment

Mainichi:  
(1) No pay-raise: Don't forget promise of "employment maintenance"  
(2) Six years after Iraq war broke out: We want to support Iraq's self-reliance from U.S.

Yomiuri:  
(1) Strengthening easy-money policy: Every possible policy necessary  
(2) Shika Nuclear Power Plant Lawsuit: Speed up assessment on new anti-seismic guidelines

Nikkei:

- (1) FRB alone cannot resolve U.S. financial crisis
- (2) Death sentence shows weight of citizen judges

Sankei:

- (1) Interception of North Korean missile: Prime Minister Aso must take all possible measures
- (2) Shika Nuclear Power Plant ruling: Coexistence of earthquakes and nuclear power plants

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Six years after Iraq war broke out: Turning point for Middle East dialogue
- (2) About-face ruling on nuclear power plant suit: Residents still worried

Akahata:

- (1) Six years after Iraq war broke out: Relying solely on military power does not resolve anything
- (8) Prime Minister's schedule, March 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
March 20, 2009

07:14

Met at the Kantei with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretaries Matsumoto and Konoike. Matsumoto stayed on.

08:14

Attended a Postal Privatization Promotion Headquarters meeting held in the Diet building. Afterward attended a cabinet meeting.

09:00

Attended an Upper House Budget Committee meeting.

TOKYO 00000628 008 OF 008

11:59

Met with Upper House Budget Committee principal director Iwanaga and Upper House member Masahisa Sato.

12:05

Returned to the Kantei.

13:03

Attended a Lower House plenary session.

14:50

Met with Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Okamura and others at the Imperial Hotel. Afterward attended a JCCI regular general meeting.

16:28

Met with ruling bloc employment project team chair and former MHLW Minister Kawasaki, former MHLW Minister Sakaguchi and others, in the presence of Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura, MHLW Minister Masuzoe and others.

17:48

Met with Venezuelan Energy and Petroleum Minister Ramirez.

18:25

Met with Cabinet Intelligence Director Mitani.

19:44

Dined at a Hotel Okura Chinese restaurant with Administrative Reform Minister Amari and LDP Policy Research Council Senior Deputy Chairman Sonoda.

22:01

Had drinks with his secretary at the hotel's bar.

23:26

Returned to his official residence.

